

causes" of this crisis, are they going to fix the world? You can see why their misconception, their misunderstanding, their erroneous narrative of what the problem is doesn't help solve the problem.

It is time for the Biden administration to acknowledge the reality of the situation and look at solutions that are realistic and effective. In order to get this crisis under control, we have to move quickly on a bipartisan basis to insist on the enforcement of our immigration laws when people attempt to enter our country other than through legal means. That is the only viable path forward, and the sooner the administration understands that, the better off we will all be.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The Senator from Nebraska.

### BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I would thank my colleague, the senior Senator from Texas, for his comments and his perspective and his insight, as a Senator serving from a border State, on what they are facing every single day. I would say to my colleague that Nebraska has become a border State. I know Colorado has become a border State. Every State in this country now is feeling the effects of the chaos that we see at our southern border, so my thanks to the senior Senator from Texas for offering his perspective on that.

I would say that on January 13 in Nebraska, we had two Nebraska State Patrol officers who pulled over two separate vehicles that were hours away from each other. One car contained 50,000 suspected fentanyl pills. The other contained a suspected fentanyl-cocaine mixture. Both cars were driven up from the border. These are only the latest instances of synthetic opioid trafficking in my State of Nebraska. In 2022, the Nebraska State Patrol confiscated 66 pounds of fentanyl, and that is up from 25 pounds the year before and 10 pounds in 2020.

In Nebraska and throughout this Nation, the numbers of drug seizures are staggering. At the southwest border, there was a 55-percent increase in fentanyl seizures from just November to December. Heroin seizures increased by 52 percent the month before. Methamphetamine seizures increased as well.

We know what is driving these drug trafficking numbers: We have a crisis at our southern border. The effects of that crisis are rippling across the country, felt by communities in Nebraska and beyond.

When we cannot control who is entering the United States, what they are bringing in, or where they are going, that is a serious national security risk.

Let's go over the numbers. Customs and Border Protection encountered 2.3 million migrants at the southern bor-

der this past fiscal year—more encounters than any other year in our history. Migrant encounters in December reached the highest monthly level ever recorded, with over 250,000 encounters in 1 month. That number had tripled in just 2 years. And it gets even worse. Border Patrol agents have stopped individuals on the government's terror watch list 38 times so far since October. Suspected terrorist encounters will hit record levels if this trend continues through 2023. Gang-affiliated encounters skyrocketed last year as well, from 348 to 751.

These historic statistics should concern anyone who cares about our country's security and the safety of our communities and the safety of American families. But this administration doesn't consider what is going on at the border to be a crisis. In fact, our President hardly seems to consider what is going on at the border at all. Despite his recent trip south for what I thought was a photo op, his administration has exacerbated the border crisis.

In case anybody has forgotten, let me refresh your memories. With simple strokes of his pen, President Biden ended the national emergency declaration at the border. He halted construction on the border wall, and he scaled back ICE enforcement in the first few months of his Presidency.

No amount of photo ops can change what we all know: This administration has not only failed to prioritize the safety and security of our border, it has put forward policies over the past 2 years that have worsened this crisis.

Only a month ago, President Biden himself insisted that "there are more important things going on." I happen to think the national security threat posed by an influx of suspected terrorists across the border is important. I think that human trafficking overrunning our border is important. I think the massive increase in overdoses due to drug smuggling across the border is important. Across the country, fentanyl is now the leading cause of death for Americans ages 18 to 49. Between 2019 and 2021, Nebraska's largest county saw an appalling 400-percent increase in fentanyl overdose deaths.

Complacency is not an acceptable response to this atrocious uptick in loss of life. My Republican colleagues and I have real, commonsense solutions to the problems that our border is facing. We need to invest more in new border security measures and resources for the men and women who serve us honorably as Border Patrol agents. We need to end the lenient policies like catch-and-release and increase penalties for people who don't show up for their immigration court hearings. We need the Department of Homeland Security to create a serious, comprehensive strategy to address those issues.

Simply throwing more tax dollars toward a smartphone app that offers migrants appointments to cross our bor-

der—well, that is what the Biden administration has proposed. It is not the right response to the mayhem we are seeing. Their policies do nothing to secure the border and to reinforce our Nation's security.

Until President Biden and my Democratic colleagues seriously work with us to fix this border chaos once and for all, we can expect to see more drugs brought into our country, more women and children facing a life of sex trafficking, and more threats to the security of our Nation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

### BORDER SECURITY

Mrs. CAPITO. Madam President, I rise today at the beginning of this new year to talk about a problem we have talked about a lot, but unfortunately we haven't gotten the results we need, and that is to talk about our southern border.

It is not a new topic for me—I have been on the floor many times talking about this, as have my colleagues—and it is not a new topic for the American people because they see this every day, and many people are living it very close-up. Many of my colleagues can say the same because this is a topic they have unfortunately had to discuss over and over and over again, with no real results, and we are going to hear from some of them today.

Years ago on this Senate floor, I said:

I urge my colleagues here in the Senate to take a long—hard look at the undisputed facts that demonstrate the crisis at the border is escalating.

When I said those words, it was December 2018. The number of apprehensions along the southern border then was a little more than 60,000. Over the weekend, Customs and Border Protection released the numbers for this past December, and apprehensions along our southern border were reported at 251,487—an alltime high.

You can see from the chart I have here—you might not be able to read the numbers, but the dark blue is what we have been doing all through 2022, far eclipsing the light blue of 2021, which